

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01  
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R 171730Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2851  
INFO AMCONSUL MILAN  
AMCONSUL FLORENCE  
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 2661

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, IT  
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF PSI SECRETARY CRAXI ON CURRENT ISSUES

1. IN A FEBRUARY 16 MEETING WITH PSI SECRETARY CRAXI, HE MADE A NUMBER OF INTERESTING COMMENTS ON CURRENT ISSUES ON THE ITALIAN SCENE. CRAXI'S COMMENTS ON THE PSI'S CURRENT INITIATIVE TO HAVE BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH ALL OF THE ABSTAINING PARTIES WHICH SUPPORT THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT INDICATE THAT THE INITIATIVE IS PROBABLY MOTIVATED BY TWO FACTORS: (A) THE PSI'S FRUSTRATION WITH THE STYLE OF THE MINORITY DC GOVERNMENT AND WITH THE ADVANTAGES THAT THE PSI SEES THE DC DERIVING THEREFROM; AND (B) THE PSI'S WISH TO STAY IN THE LIMELIGHT. THERE APPEARS TO BE A STRONG AND GROWING DESIRE WITHIN THE PSI TO CHANGE PRESENT GOVERNMENT FORMULA BUT NO CLEAR IDEA ON WHAT COULD, PRACTICALLY, BE DONE. MANY IN THE PSI TEND TO FAVOR A FORMULA THAT WOULD PUT THE PSI (AND PROBABLY THE PSDI) IN THE GOVERNMENT AND BRING THE PCI INTO THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. WHILE CRAXI DOES NOT FAVOR PUTTING THE PCI INTO THE MAJORITY, HE NEVERTHELESS SHARES OTHER PSI LEADERS' CONCERN THAT PRESENT FORMULA, IF CONTINUED MUCH LONGER, WILL WORK TO SERIOUS DISADVANTAGE OF PSI. PSI LEADERS UNDERSTAND THAT THE DC IS NOT LIKELY TO ACCEPT ANY FORMULA THAT WOULD PUT THE PCI IN THE

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MAJORITY. THEY ARE THEREFORE LIKELY TO CONTINUE PRESSING AND PROBING (AS IN THE INITIATIVE FOR BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS) RATHER THAN FORCING A "CRISIS IN THE DARK" WHICH COULD CONCEIVABLY LEAD TO EARLY ELECTIONS, A DEVELOPMENT WHICH THE PSI CLEARLY DOES NOT WANT.

2. IN CONNECTION WITH THIS GENERAL SUBJECT, CRAXI WAS PARTICU-

LARLY SCATHING IN HIS REMARKS ABOUT PRI PRESIDENT LA MALFA WHOM HE CHARACTERIZED AS "PLAYING THE PCI'S GAME," MOTIVATED EITHER BY SENILITY OR BY HIS DESIRE TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OR PRIME MINISTER AND TO HAVE HIS SON INSTALLED AS HIS SUCCESSOR IN THE PARTY. LA MALFA'S CURRENT CALLS FOR PCI PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNING OF THE COUNTRY ARE PARTICULARLY FRUSTRATING TO CRAXI BECAUSE, AS CRAXI SEES IT, ON A TACTICAL LEVEL IT DEPRIVES THE LAY PARTIES OF ANY REAL POLITICAL CLOUT (WHICH THEY COULD HAVE IF THEY WERE UNITED) AND WOULD IN ADDITION BE DANGEROUS FOR THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN ITALY.

3. THE PSI IS CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A NATIONWIDE SERIES OF CONGRESSES OF THE PARTY'S PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS. CRAXI SAID THAT APPROXIMATELY 70 PERCENT OF THESE WERE COMPLETED AND THAT HIS SUPPORTERS HAD WON IN THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THEM. (THIS IS BORNE OUT BY REPORTS FROM THE CONSULATES.) HOWEVER, HE NOTED, THESE CHANGES AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL WOULD NOT BE REFLECTED IN THE DIRECTORATE OF THE NATIONAL PARTY UNTIL THE NEXT NATIONAL CONGRESS WHICH WOULD NORMALLY NOT BE HELD FOR ANOTHER TWO YEARS. CRAXI DID NOT CONFIRM THE CURRENT RUMORS THAT HE IS PLANNING A SURPRISE EMERGENCY NATIONAL CONGRESS SOMETIME LATER THIS YEAR. FROM HIS COMMENTS ON THIS AND OTHER ISSUES (E.G., HIS EFFORTS TO PUT HIS OWN PEOPLE IN SENIOR POSITIONS IN UIL AND CGIL), IT APPEARS THAT CRAXI HAS DEVELOPED AND IS IMPLEMENTING A PLAN OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. WHILE CRAXI CLEARLY DOES NOT WANT ELECTIONS FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS AT THE EARLIEST, HE SEES SUCH ELECTIONS AS ESSENTIAL TO A GENUINE RENEWAL OF HIS PARTY AND TO CONSOLIDATION OF HIS LEADERSHIP. HE BELIEVES THAT THE PSI CONDUCTED A "DISASTROUSLY BAD" ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN 1976 AND THAT IT CAN AND MUST

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DO BETTER IN THE NEXT ELECTION. CRAXI WAS RETICENT ABOUT THE SPECIFICS OF A NEW PSI POLICY LINE TO REFLECT HIS NEW STRENGTH WITHIN THE PARTY. BASED ON OTHER INFORMATION WE HAVE IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HIS SUPPORT IS BASED ON DESIRE FOR CHANGE AND SOME CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY AS A LEADER. THERE IS AS YET NO CONSENSUS ON POLICY AS BETWEEN COOPERATION WITH THE DC OR PCI. TO A DEGREE THE PSI BENEFITS FROM ITS POLICY OF OPPORTUNISTIC IRRESPONSIBILITY IN A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY AND UNHAPPINESS.

4. REFERENCE WAS MADE TO A POSSIBILITY OF A CRAXI VISIT TO THE US. WHILE HE HAD LAST FALL TALKS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT IN MARCH OR APRIL OF THIS YEAR, HE IS NOW RATHER UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE TIMING OF SUCH A VISIT. HE ALSO EXPRESSED, BUT DID NOT EXPLAIN, SOME UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FORMAT OR OCCASION FOR HIS VISIT. REFERENCE WAS ALSO MADE TO EARLIER DISCUSSIONS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT BY A GROUP OF SOCIALIST PARLIAMENTARIANS TO BE ORGANIZED UNDER THE IVP PROGRAM. CRAXI IS OBVIOUSLY STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF THIS BUT CONCERNED ABOUT TIMING BECAUSE, IF HE SHOULD GO TO THE US THIS YEAR, HE WOULD STRONGLY PREFER THAT HIS VISIT TAKE PLACE BEFORE

THAT OF THE PARLIAMENTARIANS. HE PROMISED TO CONSIDER THESE  
QUESTIONS FURTHER AND DISCUSS THEM WITH US AGAIN IN THE NOT-TOO-  
DISTANT FUTURE.BEAUDRY

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## Message Attributes

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